What is dementia?

Dementia is the name for a group of symptoms

Dementia symptoms are caused by diseases that stop the brain from working properly. It is different to the normal changes that happen as people get older.

Memory loss is just one symptom of dementia

Dementia affects everyone differently. Some of the common changes people notice include:

- feeling, speaking or acting differently
- confusion and misunderstanding
- forgetting things that recently happened.

If you notice any of these symptoms in yourself or someone else, speak to a GP.

The sooner a person speaks to their GP, the sooner they can get the support they need.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia

Other types of dementia include:

- vascular dementia
- Lewy body dementia
- frontotemporal dementia.

There are other rarer types of dementia too. Some people can have mixed dementia with more than one type. The type of dementia affects the symptoms a person will experience.

Is it dementia or something else?

There isn't one test to find out if you have dementia. Instead, doctors will ask you about your symptoms and test your memory. They may check your sight, hearing and movement. You may also need blood tests and brain scans. The results of these tests can also show if your symptoms are being caused by something else.

Anyone can get dementia

Dementia is most common in older people. However, sometimes younger people can get it too. This is called young-onset dementia.

Reducing your risk of dementia

There are things you can do to reduce your risk of developing dementia. These include staying physically and mentally active, not smoking or drinking too much alcohol, and keeping to a healthy weight. We have more information about how you can reduce your risk of dementia on our website and in print. Call us on **0300 303 5933** to get a copy.

For help talking to your GP about dementia, see our Symptoms checklist – **alzheimers.org.uk/symptoms-checklist**

We are here for you. Call us on **0333 150 3456** to talk about dementia. We can speak with you in any language.

There are lots of ways you can get involved and help people affected by dementia – **alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved**

Alzheimer's Society

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